

Department of Public Welfare

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TO: Mr. John R. Malben, Administrator
Hastings State Hospital -- Chairman, East Metropolitan Mental Health
Coordinating Committee
Aug. 30, 1965

FROM: David J. Veil, M. D.
Medical Director

SUBJECT: Study of Hastings State Hospital

At the opening meeting of the Legislative Building Commission on Friday, August 27, 1965, Senator Fogg, Chairman, asked that the Department of Public Welfare carry out a very thorough study of the Hastings State Hospital, with a particular view to the future building program. If Hastings State Hospital is to be suitably renovated, the State will have to invest several million dollars in new buildings. It is obviously important to insure that this investment will be sound.

Questions before us are:

- (1) Should Hastings be abandoned altogether?
- (2) Should it be rebuilt in whole or in part? If so, to what end?
- (3) If rebuilt, should it be to continue as a hospital for the mentally ill, or be redesignated in whole or in part for the mentally retarded?

The questions are very complex. They involve a consideration of the present and future needs of the eastern metropolitan area as regards services for the mentally ill. The answers to these questions must take into account also the needs for the mentally retarded throughout the entire state, and it must take into account effects such as new community projects, foreseen which are as yet pretty unpredictable. The study should consider other hospitals. For example:

- (1) If Hastings State Hospital is abandoned as a psychiatric hospital for the metropolitan area, what will be the capability of Ancker or some other hospital or hospitals to take up the slack?
- (2) As St. Peter's district is now less than 500,000 population, might it be more feasible to redistribute St. Peter's counties among Hastings, Ancker, William, and Rochester; redesignate St. Peter for mental retardation; and make plans to transfer some of the resident patients to other hospitals?

I raise these additional questions not alone for their content, but to show how really complicated this problem is.

As I have thought about the matter, I am convinced that it will be difficult or even impossible for the Department of Public Welfare itself to carry out really objective studies. Other possibilities are:

- (1) The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Mental Health Coordinating Committee
- (2) The Metropolitan St. Paul Hospital Planning Council
- (3) A private firm, such as Hamilton Associates or the new community mental health group under Whittington, et al

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(b) The National Institute of Mental Health

The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Coordinating Committee is limited in virtue of being a purely voluntary association without staff resources to carry out the study itself, though it will be of great value as a beginning point for discussion. The Metropolitan St. Paul Hospital Planning Council might be quite suitable, though possibly unable to extend its inquiry too well into some of the larger and related questions involving mental retardation services, Ancker State Hospital and St. Peter State Hospital, etc. A private firm would cost too much; though we could not make a modest amount (less than \$1,000) from research funds.

I think the National Institute of Mental Health might be a very suitable agency to carry out a survey, as they could be objective, they could command vast resources and bring in consultants from all over the country, and I believe there is no cost.

Therefore I ask you, as Chairman of the East Metropolitan Mental Health Coordinating Committee, to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee for discussion and make recommendation how to proceed. Meanwhile I will contact the National Institute of Mental Health to see how their services are arranged in this type of situation. Also I will send a copy of this note to the Mental Retardation Planning Council, as I am sure the question will interest them.

DJW:rej

cc - Mr. Harold H. Fapp, Senator

Mr. Ronald Olson, Assoc. Secy. Legislative Building Commission

Mr. Morris Hirsch

Mental Health Medical Policy Committee

East Metropolitan Mental Health Coordinating Committee

Mental Retardation Planning Council -- Associates: Mrs. Emily Luther
Mr. Gerald Walsh
Mr. John Broady

Dr. John A. Bacharach

Mr. Bruce Fischer

Dr. Burton F. Chace

Mr. William Lightburn